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CONTRIBUTIONS OF BUDDHISM TO CHRISTIANITY.¹

WE are now aware that most dissimilar forces have combined in the origin of Christianity and of the Gospel narratives of the life of Jesus: of foreign civilizations, especially the Hellenistic, Persian and Babylonian. But I dare assert almost with certainty that Buddhism has not furnished any contribution, as I shall endeavor to show in the first part of this paper.

For this purpose I shall have to emphasize a point of view which to my knowledge has hitherto received no consideration. This is the essential difference between the *alleged* Buddhist elements in the canonical Gospels and the *actual* Buddhist elements in the Apocryphal Gospels. The narratives of the canonical Gospels which accord with Buddhist stories do not at all bear a specifically Buddhistic or even a specifically Indian character; their origin is entirely comprehensible without the hypothesis of an Indian derivation. On the other hand the stories of the Apocryphal Gospels, parallels to which exist in Buddhist literature, show genuine features of India's romantic lore. Why is this not true of the New Testament? This important difference seems to me to be of paramount significance in clearing up the matter. Here at the very beginning of

Authorized translation from the German by Lydia G. Robinson.

my exposition I have thus stated what may be expected from it, because I wished to forestall the assumption that this essay belongs to the numerous attempts to "Buddhize" the New Testament.

The similarities between the stories of Buddhism and those of the New Testament have formed an arena where dilettantism has long had a flourishing existence. There every resemblance is explained as a loan without pausing to ask when the Buddhist texts which had been called into service were written, whether the loan is at all possible historically, whether the details of the parallels are of such a kind as to justify the idea of an external connection, and whether the conditions in India and Palestine were not so similar that some ideas and stories would naturally show a certain similarity in spite of an independent origin.

Further, the problem is frequently treated as if its solution affected the value of Christianity and Buddhism. In this point of view freedom from prejudice—an essential condition of all scientific work—is impossible, and in its place there enters the tendency to prove according to the author's religious position either that Christianity is free from Buddhist influences or else that it is under the influence of Buddhism, whereas in reality the details under discussion are entirely without importance for the *essential character* of either religion. Neither Christianity nor Buddhism has anything to win or to lose from the answer to the question with regard to their connection. The whole matter has no religious nor ethical significance but is of value only for the history of literature.

Under these circumstances a word should be spoken first of all with regard to the literature really deserving attention in any consideration of the subject. In spite of the overproduction in this domain only a few volumes and treatises are of importance.

To Rudolf Seydel is due the credit of having turned the

treatment of the theme into scientific channels. In his two books, "The Gospel of Jesus in Its Relation to Buddha-legend and Buddha-lore"² and "Buddha-legends and the Life of Jesus According to the Gospels,"³ Seydel believes he has been able to establish the influence of Buddhism, and indeed of Buddhist literary sources, on the Gospels, and for this view he has won as much enthusiastic applause as he has received decided opposition. That he undertook to prove more than is capable of proof is not denied to-day even by the supporters of the loan hypothesis.

Of the literature which followed upon his books, the "Indian Influence on Gospel Narratives"⁴ of G. A. van den Bergh van Eysinga and Albert J. Edmunds's *Buddhist and Christian Gospels*⁵ deserve unlimited recognition because of their scientific method. Both of these works, and especially the second, represent a sort of retreat from Seydel's standpoint; but both advocate the dependence of the Gospels on Buddhist models although Edmunds regards the loan question as a secondary consideration. It is a special merit of Eysinga's work that it rejects Seydel's groundless hypothesis of a Buddhistically colored Christian Gospel which the authors of the canonical Gospels are supposed to have used together with their other sources; also that it does not seek to render probable any dependence of Gospel narratives on Buddhistic *writings*, but only on Buddhistic materials which have been handed down by *oral* tradition. One year before the appearance of the first German edition of Eysinga's work a similar standpoint was taken by Otto Pfeleiderer in his work on "The Christ

² *Das Evangelium von Jesu in seinen Verhältnissen zu Buddha-Sage und Buddha-Lehre*, Leipsic, 1882.

³ *Die Buddha-Legende und das Leben Jesu nach den Evangelien*, Leipsic, 1884; 2d ed., Weimar, 1897.

⁴ *Indische Einflüsse auf evangelische Erzählungen*, 2d ed., Göttingen, 1909.

⁵ *Buddhist and Christian Gospels Now First Compared from the Originals*. [Edited with English notes on Chinese versions dating from the early Christian centuries by Prof. Masaharu Anesaki, 4th ed., 2 vols., Philadelphia, 1908, 1909.

of Primitive Christian Faith in the Light of the History of Religions.”⁶

Of those works which support the opposite point of view we would mention as especially valuable and thoughtful the treatise of Louis de la Vallée Poussin on “Buddhism and the Canonical Gospels with Reference to a Recent Publication,”⁷ (the third edition of the above-mentioned book of Edmunds); the twelfth chapter on “Comparative Science” of Ernst Windisch’s “Birth of Buddha and the Doctrine of the Transmigration of Souls”;⁸ and Otto Wecker’s “Christ and Buddha.”⁹

Especially noteworthy also is an article, “Christ in India,” published by the American Sanskritist E. Washburn Hopkins, the successor of W. D. Whitney to the chair of Sanskrit at Yale, in his book *India Old and New*.¹⁰ This article may be divided into two parts of unequal value. In the first, the contents of which are quite unexpected from the title of the treatise, Hopkins investigates the parallels between Christianity and Buddhism in such a careful and plausible way that in the main I can endorse his expositions. The case is different with the second part which discusses the relations between Christianity and Krishnaism, for this seems to me to require thorough testing. In this domain I have arrived at conclusions essentially different from those of Professor Hopkins. Especially do I place at a later date than he the Christian influence in Krishnaism and other Indian religions.

In his clear expositions Windisch reaches a result to which every calm and impartial judge of these matters

⁶ *Das Christusbild des urchristlichen Glaubens in religionsgeschichtlicher Beleuchtung*, Berlin, 1903.

⁷ “Le Bouddhisme et les Evangiles Canoniques à propos d’une publication récente” in the *Revue biblique* of July, 1906.

⁸ *Buddha’s Geburt und die Lehre von der Seelenwanderung*, Leipsic, 1908, pp. 195-222.

⁹ *Christus und Buddha*, 3d ed., Münster, 1910.

¹⁰ New York and London, 1901.

can subscribe: "We should not let the parallels between Buddhism and Christianity escape us, but the word 'parallels' must be understood in its proper sense as lines which do not touch nor intersect." And with reference to the ideas and narratives akin to Buddhism which occur in the writings of the New Testament in spite of the fundamental contrast between Christianity and Buddhism, he says: "What has taken place may perhaps be thus formulated, that ideas and materials having their origin in the philosophical views of the time and in other religions, and having come into circulation, have been made serviceable to Christian ideas."¹¹

This is the utmost that can be conceded to the advocates of Buddhist influence. In reality no influence of Buddhist tales or Buddhist doctrine upon the New Testament scriptures has as yet been proved.¹² To make this clear I shall briefly enter into those parallels which, mainly on account of the age of the corresponding Buddhist stories, have generally been considered the most convincing from the point of view of the advocates of Buddhist originality and Christian dependence.

1. In John ix. 1-3, we read: "And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents, etc."

This incident has been compared to the Buddhistic (and Brahmanistic) doctrine of transmigration and the power of deeds to demand retribution. Hopkins gives

¹¹ See also Hopkins, pp. 136, 143, 144, 168. The cautious A. J. Edmunds makes a similar statement in *The Open Court*, May 1911, p.262: "My general attitude toward the Buddhist-Christian problem is this: Each religion is independent in the main, but the younger one arose in such a hot-bed of eclecticism that it probably borrowed a few legends and ideas from the older, which was quite accessible to it."

¹² This is likewise admitted by Eysinga in the words (p. 104): "We must grant from the very beginning that it is hard to furnish an absolute proof for these points."

expression to a correct fundamental idea when he observes, "If Christ had been under Buddhistic influence he would surely have said, This man only." More correctly the statement should read: If the author of the Fourth Gospel had been under Buddhist influence, he might have put in the mouth of Christ only the answer, "This man."

From the earliest times until the present it is the general opinion in India that blindness is the consequence of having blinded some one else in a previous life. Without the conception of an after effect of some such crime in a former existence, the question the disciples put to Christ in the Gospel of John would be quite unintelligible. In spite of this, Hopkins with good reason denies the influence of a Buddhist source on the Biblical narrative because there is no corresponding story in the life of Buddha.

In the "Lotus of the Good Law," a Buddhist work which cannot be placed before 200 A. D., there is a similar parable of a physician who heals a blind man and accounts for the blindness in the usual way as the punishment for previous sins. With regard to the story in John, Professor Hopkins observes (p. 127):

"The only parallel in the Gospel account is one of thought, for it is claimed that such an idea as is here presented in the disciples' question implies a doctrine that is specially Buddhistic (namely, sin working out in disease in a new birth), because it is foreign to Jewish ways of thinking. But the latter point may be admitted without any necessity of accepting the explanation, since an Egyptian source is quite as probable as a loan from India." Later on he adds (p. 136): "It is possible that the idea of *karma* [the law of retribution for sins committed in a former existence] may have been received from India."

I am surprised that Hopkins here pays no attention to the second part of the question of the disciples, namely, whether the sins of the parents were to blame that the

man was born blind; for this question is based on the formidable statement of the Old Testament which has found its confirmation in the modern knowledge of the burden of heredity and does credit to the Hebrew sense of reality: "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation." The second part of the disciples' question, which accordingly is rooted in a typically Jewish conception, ought to point the way to a correct interpretation of the first part, for it is *a priori* improbable that these two divisions should originate in the thought-cycles of different nations. Moreover a scientific method will always endeavor to derive and to understand the religious, and likewise the philosophical, ideas of a people from the conceptions of its own nationality, and not until it fails to find there any satisfactory point of contact will it consider the possibility of a loan from foreign lands.

In the present case, in order to establish the assumptions for the first part of the question as to whether the blind condition in which the man was born had its cause in a sin of his own, and was therefore committed in a previous existence, it is not necessary to go so far away as India. Nor shall we need to look for it in the Egyptian religion, which Hopkins considers just as possible as a loan from India; especially as the popular Egyptian notion of the transformability of the human soul after death does not furnish adequate grounds. Rather must we first prove whether we shall have to agree with Hopkins that the notion of the pre-existence or transmigration of the soul was an idea foreign to Jewish thought at that time. This is not at all the case, for the idea of transmigration was by no means unknown to Judeo-Alexandrian philosophy. Philo, whose doctrines are recognized as forming one basis of the Fourth Gospel, possesses the doctrine of transmigration in common with the Pythagoreans and Or-

phici, from whom he received it. Zeller writes on this subject in his "Grecian Philosophy,"¹³ "Not until they are separated from the body do those souls that have kept themselves free from dependence upon it attain again to unalloyed enjoyment of their higher life; . . . to others, on the rare occasions in which he speaks of the subject, Philo holds out the prospect of transmigration demanded by his assumptions." The accompanying note gives a series of illustrative citations. Eysinga and O. Wecker refer also to the Wisdom of Solomon (viii. 19, 20) where about 100 B. C. the words, "Being good, I came into a body undefiled," are put in the mouth of Solomon, and in this utterance they find evidence for a belief among the Alexandrian Jews in the pre-existence of the soul. Hence we have not the slightest reason to assume Buddhist influence for the Fourth Gospel's story of the man born blind; and we can easily understand how Otto Pfleiderer, who at first saw in this story one of the best foundations for Seydel's hypothesis, could afterwards withdraw entirely from this position.

2. When the advocates of Buddhist influence lay special stress on the legends of Buddha's supernatural birth (which were in existence three or four centuries before Christ) this argument is untenable for two reasons. In the first place because of the enormous difference between the Buddhist and Christian birth legends. Ancient pre-Christian Buddhism knows nothing of the virginity of the mother of Buddha; on the contrary the earlier texts expressly say that she was not a virgin¹⁴ when the Bodhisattva (the future Buddha) entered her womb in the form of a white elephant, later to emerge into the light of day from her right side. The second reason against the dependence of

¹³ *Philosophie der Griechen*, 4th ed., III, 2, p. 446. See also on p. 451: "Because he derived even the union of soul and body from a voluntary act, etc."

¹⁴ Hopkins, page 129.

Christian upon Buddhist legends lies in the well-known fact that many of the religious founders and teachers in the Orient—and often enough also outside of the Orient (Plato!)—are claimed to have been born in a supernatural manner. Some of these stories, as for instance the Parsi prophecy of the birth of the future saviour, are much more easily comparable to the story of the birth of Christ than are the Indian legends of the supernatural birth of Buddha.

3. The last parallel to be taken into consideration is the temptation story reported of both Buddha and Christ, and indeed in both cases occurring in connection with a fast. There is only one Buddhist temptation story referring to the time when Buddha had attained the redeeming enlightenment, which need be considered for purposes of comparison; but we must mention that Buddhist literature is remarkably rich in analogous tales in which Buddha is tempted or annoyed by Satan now in one manner, and now in another. Christ fasts 40 days *before* the temptation, Buddha 28 days *after* the temptation. Now in India fasting is just as common a custom as in Palestine, so that this correspondence which is not even perfectly exact but qualified by two differences does not testify in favor of the loan. And in details the temptation stories themselves differ just as conspicuously from one another as do the stories of the supernatural birth of the two religious teachers.

The reports of the temptation of Christ are well known (Matt. iv. 1 ff.; Luke iv. 2 ff.). The devil demands of Christ to change stones into bread, to throw himself down from the pinnacle of the temple and to worship him, the devil, in order to receive in return as a reward the kingdoms of the world and their glory. In the Buddhist legends the tempter endeavors in vain to corrupt Buddha by stimulation of the pleasures of sense; then he attacks him,

equally in vain, with a frightful storm, and finally with his hellish hosts. Even this form of the story does not appear until in the later writings. The oldest source knows only of an attempt of Satan to induce Buddha to enter into Nirvana immediately after the attainment of enlightenment without declaring to mankind the way of salvation and redeeming them from the power of darkness. In his *Buddha*¹⁵ Oldenberg remarks in a note: "It seems scarcely necessary to observe that in both cases the same obvious motives have given rise to the corresponding narratives; the notion of an influence exerted by Buddhist tradition on Christian can not be entertained." This is perfectly true. In every religion, containing both a saviour of the world and a Satan, a story of the temptation of the former by the latter will be invented. The author of a biographical devotional work would not let the opportunity for such an effective scene escape him. Only complete identity of situation or of single features, which would be comprehensible only on the one and not on the other side from the connection, could make the idea of a loan seem natural. Accordingly if in this case the difference between the accounts in the Buddhist source and in the New Testament is too great for a loan to be considered, then here too there enters the same further reason as in the case of the birth stories, against the assumption of dependence of the Christian narrative upon the Buddhist. In the story of the temptation also the more similar account of the Zarathustra legend would offer a far better subject of comparison than the Buddhist tales.

Although those investigators who wish to make the New Testament appear dependent upon Buddhism draw into the foreground other parallels, and one declares this

¹⁵ Fourth German edition, pages 135-136; English translation by William Hoey, pages 115-116. Compare with this the lucid expositions of Ernst Windisch in his work *Mara und Buddha* (Leipsic, 1895) especially in Chap. IX on "The Christian Temptation Story."

and another that to be of particular value, still the three parallels herein discussed have on the whole aroused the most general attention. Nevertheless even these prove nothing for the dependence of the Gospels upon Buddhism, and the greater part of the material adduced as pointing in this direction is of less weight.

To these minor stories belong the incident of Simeon in the temple (Luke ii. 25 ff.) to which Buddhist literature offers a parallel in the story of the venerable saint Asita, who hastens to the new-born child Buddha, takes him on his arm and declares him to be the noblest and most exalted of mankind; the stories of the twelve-year-old Jesus found in the temple (Luke ii. 41 ff.) and of the child Buddha gone astray in a country outing and found again sunk in meditation under a tree which casts miraculous shadows round about although the sun is about to set; calling the mother of Jesus blessed by a woman of the populace (Luke xi. 27) and the calling of the parents and wife of Buddha blessed by a noble maiden; the mites of the poor widow who in a Buddhist story also offers two copper pieces in a collection taken by the priests, whereupon the high priest praises this gift as more acceptable than the treasures brought by the wealthy; the Samaritan woman and the Chandāla girl by the spring; the calling of the disciples related as taking place on the first public appearance in the case of both Jesus and Buddha; the transfiguration of Jesus and Buddha, and some more.

All these briefly suggested analogies on closer inspection partly prove not to be analogies at all and partly may be interpreted very satisfactorily from the similarity of religious disposition or of external circumstances. Hence we find that if these parallels—and here I disregard the three above discussed—were to be looked upon as derived by loan, then according to the age of the Buddhist sources in which they occur, Buddhism must have been the borrower

in almost every case.¹⁶ Of the four theses in which R. Seydel has condensed the result of his comparison of the material which he collected, the second reads: "Borrowing upon the Buddhist side is impossible from chronological reasons and with reference to the history of Buddhism." Exactly the opposite proves to be the case. For instance the story of the prodigal son does not occur in Buddhist literature until 200 A. D. in the "Lotus of the Good Law" and most of the other parallels, as even Seydel admits, are to be found in the *Lalitavistara*, a northern Buddhistic biography of Buddha dating at the earliest in its present form from the second or third century after Christ. And the story of the widow's mites, without question one of the most remarkable parallels, we have only in a Chinese version of Ashvaghosha's *Buddhacarita*. The original dates back to the first century of the Christian era, but the Chinese translation not until the end of the fourth century or the beginning of the fifth.¹⁷ If the obvious objection is raised that it is possible for these Buddhist tales to be much older than the literary garb in which we now have them then this of course can be granted. But whoever makes this possibility the basis of argument without attempting a proof loses all firm ground from beneath his feet.

As to the previously mentioned parallel between the stories of Asita and Simeon, it is certain that the Indian tale would be the original, if it is necessary to assume a loan on one side to the other.¹⁸ Besides this, two of the best known of the miracles of the New Testament, parallels

¹⁶ This is also the case with an Old Testament narrative which certainly did not originate independently a second time, namely the incident of the judgment of Solomon (1 Kings iii. 16-28) which reappears not only in the Tibetan *Kandjur*, as was previously thought, but also, as we now know, in a *Jātaka*. The antiquity of the Jewish story removes all doubt that it is the original and the Buddhist version is borrowed.

¹⁷ Beal, *Abstract of Four Lectures on Buddhist Literature in China*, London, 1882, pp. 98, 99.

¹⁸ R. Pischel, *Leben und Lehre des Buddha*, 17, 18; H. Oldenberg in *Deutsche Rundschau*, Jan. 1910, No. 4, Note 30.

to which Max Müller¹⁹ pointed out in two Jātakas (tales of the previous existence of Buddha), are open to the suspicion of Indian origin. These parallels deal with the miracle by which Buddha satisfied the hunger of more than five hundred people with one loaf of bread; and with the story of the disciple who walked upon the water in a state of ecstasy, then began to sink when he awoke, but by his power of concentration was finally brought successfully to the other shore. Although the age of the Buddhist sources is uncertain in both of these cases also, nevertheless parallels from the Jātakas are always of greater weight than from the Lotus and the Lalitavistara.

An Indian origin for the story of Christ and Peter walking on the water (Matt. xiv. 25 ff.) could be based on the additional strength that its agreement with the Indian story receives from the feature that Peter begins to sink because of his little faith, as does Buddha's disciple in consequence of the terror which overcomes the ecstasy when, half-way across the river, he observes the waves. The idea that extraordinary men have possessed the power to walk or ride in a wheeled vehicle on the water does not belong so much to the India of Buddhism as to that of Brahmanism. In the Mahābhārata (VII, 2267, 8) the same thing is told of the pious and virtuous king Dilipa and Prithu Vainya (VII, 2402).²⁰ Hence this fantastic feature seems to be genuinely Indian, which of course does not exclude the possibility that it may have originated independently elsewhere.

Although in the three cases just mentioned I have been the first to be able to decide to believe in the Indian derivation of the New Testament stories, I cannot do so in the following, although at first glance the similarities are very striking.

¹⁹ "Coincidences" in *Last Essays*, 284 ff.

²⁰ E. W. Hopkins in *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. XLIX, No. 194, 1910, p. 38.

Beal²¹ has called attention to the agreement between the description in 2 Peter iii. 6, 7, 10, 12, 13, according to which the world was once destroyed by water and would be annihilated by fire in the future in order to arise again new and better, with the Buddhist account of the periodic destruction of the world by water, fire and wind. But this agreement is only external and apparent; for the Epistle of Peter refers to the Old Testament legend of the deluge, and the belief in the future destruction of the world by fire is the result of the expectation of the Judgment in which the fire that is to receive the condemned plays a decisive part. Moreover here again the analogous presentation of Parseeism offers a closer parallel. That the Parsee thought-cycle actually has exerted an influence in this case is rendered very probable by the expectation of a new world mentioned in verse 13.

Albert J. Edmunds has repeatedly²² laid great stress on John vii. 38 and xii. 34 where quotations from the scripture (γραφή) and the "law" (νόμος) are adduced that cannot be pointed out in Hebrew literature but can be, as he thinks, in the Buddhistic Pali canon. Although various distinguished scholars have become convinced that this point is established (Eysinga only in the first instance, not in the second), yet I cannot agree with them; for in these two cases also the discrepancies seem to me to be too great for me to be able to believe in a connection.

In John vii. 38 where it reads: "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water," we have here a figurative expression used by many races for the stimulating and vivifying influence which proceeds from the believer. This is entirely different from the great miracle of the Tathāgata (Buddha) which cannot be imitated by his followers,

²¹ *Romantic Legend of Sakya Buddha*. London, 1875, Introd. x, Note 1.

²² *Buddhist Texts in John*, Philadelphia-London, 1906; and "Buddhist Texts Quoted in the Fourth Gospel," *Open Court*, 1911, 257 ff.

namely that he has the power to have fire and water stream out from his body (Patisambhidāmagga I, 53).

For the second passage (John xii. 34): "The people answered him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth forever," the alleged source discovered by Edmunds in the Mahāparinibbānasutta (Dighanikāya 16, translated by Rhys Davids in *Sacred Books of the East*, XI, 40) reads as follows: "Anando, any one who has practised the four principles of psychical power, developed them, made them active and practical, pursued them, accumulated and striven to the height thereof — can, if he so should wish, remain (on earth) for the aeon or the rest of the aeon. Now, Anando, the Tathāgato has practised and perfected these; and if he so should wish, the Tathāgato could remain (on earth) for the aeon or the rest of the aeon." This parallel in my judgment loses all significance through the conditional clause that the Tathāgato could remain on earth to the end of the present aeon (*Kappa*) *if he so should wish*—which luckily for him he has exactly not wished.

That the citations in the two passages of the Gospel of John cannot be verified in Hebrew literature does not seem to be so serious to me as to the learned counsel in defence of the Buddhist origin; for either the two passages may not have been quoted literally or the Hebrew source may have been lost.

Finally there is one more very important preliminary question, bearing upon the loan hypothesis, which must be duly considered. Do the evidences of intercommunication at all permit the assumption that as early as the first century after Christ, or earlier, Buddhist legends and ideas had found their way into Palestine? The reports here to be taken into account are but scanty.²³ They admit, to be

²³ Compare among others the notices in Wecker (3d ed., p. 33 ff.) and the literature given in his note on page 33; also Edmunds's introductory chapter

sure, the *possibility* of the assumption that Buddhist influences might have penetrated to Palestine by way of Alexandria and still more probably by way of Antioch in Syria—these are the routes which Eysinga makes the historical foundation of his hypothesis—but they are not apt to raise this possibility *to a serviceable degree of probability for as early a period as the first post-Christian century.*

For those who, like Eysinga, rest upon the Loman-Van Manen standpoint that the whole New Testament originated in the second century, this deliberation has little significance. But this standpoint does not have the support of a single serious theologian in Germany, and it is untenable for the reason that it is founded on the hypothesis that the whole collection of Pauline epistles is not genuine. We may safely follow so prudent and sensible a leader as Adolf Jülicher who carefully weighs all circumstances. With the exception of the pastoral letters (Timothy and Titus) which are practically not to be considered at all for our purpose, and the so-called Catholic epistles (1 and 2 Peter, James, Jude, 1, 2, and 3 John) which belong to the second century, Jülicher brings only three of the New Testament writings down to the beginning of the second century, placing the Acts at 105 A. D.,²⁴ the Gospel of Luke somewhere between 80-110,²⁵ and the Gospel of John in the same time as his letters, namely between 100 and 125.²⁶

In the second century after Christ the circumstances mentioned above are slowly altering. With the increase

"The Possibility of Connection Between Christianity and Buddhism" (Vol. I, 4th ed., pp. 111 ff.).

²⁴ *Einleitung in das neue Testament*, 5th and 6th editions, pp. 395-397.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 295-296; still he goes beyond the year 100 with hesitancy, and his results sound different from the words of Pischel (*Leben und Lehre des Buddha*, 19) who in order to render probable the Indian origin of the story of Simeon says: "The Gospel of Luke is assigned by the critics to the second century A. D." But when Pischel directly before this remarks, "Still it is not an accident that all contact of this kind between Christianity and Buddhism is to be found in Luke," a glance at the parallels above discussed will show that this is not correct.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 212, 218, 359.

of communication, to which historical reports bear witness, Indian thoughts and materials actually press towards the west and find entrance in Christian literature. Here belongs the loan of the fish-symbol from northern Buddhism for which Pischel in his essay on "The Origin of the Christian Fish-Symbol"²⁷ thinks he had found the historical foundation in the mingling of religions now brought to light in Turkestan. A loan by this route may be questioned, for the combination of the elements of Christian, Zarathustrian, Buddhist and Chinese religions before the third century is not attested by the remarkable discoveries in Turkestan, while the Christian fish-symbol is assigned by Tertullian to the end of the second century.

The probability is that the transference of the Buddhist fish-symbol into the Christian world has traveled ahead on the same path which further on will be shown for the reception of Buddhist narratives in Christian legend, that is to say by Bactria, Persia and Syria. As to the fact of the loan itself I no longer question it. I confess that I did so for a long time, because I thought with Oldenberg (*ZDMG.* 59, 625 ff.) that the origin of the Christian fish-symbol could be explained more simply and with entire adequacy by the familiar acrostic²⁸ without the aid of foreign influences. The objections which Eysinga has raised²⁹ have convinced me that the ichthus can not have originated from that acrostic. When Eysinga demonstrates that the close sequence of these five words was not at all customary in the usage of the language and in fact cannot be found in antiquity; that the combination of these letters into an acrostic did not resemble the particular size of the initial letters in inscriptions, nothing was left to me but the assumption that the reference of the *ichthus* to Christ is not

²⁷ *Der Ursprung des christlichen Fischesymbols* (Sitzungsberichte der Berliner Akademie, 1905).

²⁸ *Ιχθὺς* = Ἰησοῦς χριστὸς θεοῦ υἱὸς σωτήρ.

²⁹ *ZDMG.* 60, 210-212.

original, but that the word first became serviceable to the Christians by the coincidence of the letters and then lost its foreign aspect.

Particularly convincing to me is the appearance of the vase of Piprāva found in Buddha's grave (hence dating from the year 477 B. C.) with its handle in the form of a fish.³⁰ A comparison of this ancient representation of the Buddhist symbol with the numerous Christian fish pictures in the catacombs will probably act upon others also with the directness in which sense-perception always excels reflection. It seems to me now to be just as impossible for the far-fetched fish-symbol to have been made a symbol of the Saviour in Christianity independently of Buddhism.

In India the literary evidence of this symbol, as is well known, leads us back as far as the Brāhmana literature. Manu, the father of mankind, is saved from the great flood by the supernatural fish (Satapatha Br. I. 8. 1, 1-10) which later interpretation recognizes as the god Vishnu. But the actual beginnings of the fish-symbol reach back still more remotely in the ancient Semitic Orient, whence it penetrated into India, to the Babylonian fish divinities and the legend of the pious Par-napishtim whom the fish-god Ea rescues from the deluge. Yes we may go even farther and say that the origin of the symbol itself may be followed back to the primitive condition of mankind in those times when man still saw in many of the animals that surpassed him in strength and ability, beings of a higher order which he therefore deified. The fish belongs to the oldest totem animals and because of its ability to swim and to live under the water it aroused the admiration of mankind still in the state of savagery.³¹

³⁰ See the illustration in Pischel's *Leben und Lehre des Buddha*, 45, and "Buddhist Relics" in *The Open Court*, Jan. 1910, p. 33.

³¹ Compare the useful compilations of Paul Carus in his article "Animal Symbolism," *The Open Court*, February 1911, p. 79.

The Indian fish-symbol which reached Christianity through the mingling of pagan cults among the people of the Mediterranean has led me away from my proper theme to an excursion into remotest antiquity. We shall now return to the second century when Buddhist elements begin to penetrate into the Christian world.

What was improbable with regard to the canonical Gospels on historical considerations, and on closer investigation of details proved unfounded, does not hold true with the Apocryphal Gospels. With this remark I come back to what I said at the beginning of this essay.

The Apocryphal books of the New Testament are mainly spurious Gospels and stories of the apostles belonging mostly to the third, fourth and fifth centuries, some however being older like the Proto-Gospel of James which dates back to the end of the second century. In fantastic style and with a preference for adventurous miracles these Apocryphal Gospels treat mainly of the childhood but also of the passion and resurrection of Jesus.

The parallels with Buddhist tales in the Apocrypha are of an entirely fabulous character, and are entirely different from those claimed to exist in the canonical Gospels. Here we have to do with genuine Indian miracle tales—not miracles of situation for purposes of edification but quite unheard-of miracles the invention of which had for its sole purpose to arouse the astonishment of the hearer or reader.

Since there is no law to decide here between a loan and an independent invention, the final word about the main point must be left to scientific discernment. Whoever possesses a direct insight for what is right, which often is more important for the advancement of scientific knowledge than scholarship or industry, will not doubt for an instant that the stories herein to be adduced from the Apocryphal Gospels have been transferred from Bud-

dhist legends in which they likewise appear. For me the strongest proof that the Buddhist influence first entered into Christianity in the Apocrypha is exactly the fundamental difference between *these* parallels and those of the canonical Gospels.

Credit is due Ernst Kuhn for having first pointed out loans from Buddhism in the Apocryphal Gospels in the Gurupūjākāumudi.³²

In the Lalitavistara there are two stories which on account of philological reasons may be counted among the older component parts of the work. They relate how the Bodhisattva (the future Buddha) "was once brought in festive procession to the temple of the gods and at his entrance the lifeless images of the gods stood up from their thrones in order to throw themselves at the feet of the Bodhisattva; further how, when brought to school, he astonished his teacher by the most exact knowledge of the sixty-four kinds of script and during the recitation of the alphabet wise sayings were heard, to the great edification of the whole school" (page 116). We meet with the first of these two stories in the Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew, and with the second in the Gospel of Thomas in such striking agreement that their Buddhist origin stares us in the face. Particularly convincing as a genuine Indian idea in this second story is the mystical meaning of letters which the Christ-child explains to his teacher. Nor can it be a chance correspondence that both in the narrative of the Lalitavistara and in the Gospel of Thomas the teacher falls unconscious to the ground at the appearance in the school of the miraculous child.

The adoption of these two stories in the collection of Christian legends in the period between the end of the second and the middle of the fourth centuries is attested

³² Presented at the 50th anniversary of Albrecht Weber's Doctorate Jubilee, Leipsic, 1896, pp. 116-119.

by Irenaeus, Eusebius and Athanasius. These fortunate observations of Ernst Kuhn must arouse the expectation that a more exact investigation of Apocryphal Gospels and stories of the apostles would bring to light many other Buddhistic elements. Eysinga has fulfilled this expectation even though perhaps still more material may eventually be found. This scholar has revealed the following connections which can not be reasoned away by the assumption of accidental correspondence.

In the Lalitavistara we read that while still in his mother's womb the future Buddha emitted a marvelous light, and the Brahman sources relate the same of Krishna. Since the Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew relates the same phenomenon of the birth of Jesus, at the same time adding "*nulla pollutio sanguinis facta est in nascente, nullus dolor in parturiente,*" which in Buddhist sources (the Digha- and Majjhima-Nikāya) is likewise related of the birth of the Bodhisattva, the Buddhist origin of these accounts is perfectly evident. The declaration in the last-named source that the Bodhisattva could stand as soon as he was born and took seven steps towards the north, Eysinga has well associated with the story in the Proto-Gospel of James that the Virgin Mary when six months old took seven steps towards her mother as soon as she had been placed upon the ground. For the further establishment of the Indian derivation of this story I might add that the concept of the "seven steps" has been well established in India since antiquity. In Vedic times the seven steps of the young pair belonged to the universally prevalent marriage customs.³³

Far more remarkable however is the following parallel: According to the Lalitavistara all motion in the world of nature and humanity stands still before the birth of

³³ J. Jolly, "Recht und Sitte" in *Grundriss der indo-arischen Philologie und Altertumskunde*, II, 8, p. 54.

the Bodhisattva. The partly opened flowers cease to bloom; the winds stop blowing; the rivers and brooks no longer flow; sun, moon and stars stand still; all human activity is paralyzed. According to the Proto-Gospel of James, Joseph notices the same miracles before the birth of Jesus. He looks into the heavens and sees how everything in the atmosphere and the sky has suddenly come to a stand. The rest of the report which I here quote in the words of Eysinga is apparently a more detailed rendering of the shorter description of the wonderful stoppage of events in the *Lalitavistara*: "Joseph himself walked around and yet didn't walk around. He saw that laborers sat around a platter; those who were chewing did not chew, those who were helping themselves did not help themselves; some who were putting food to their mouth put nothing in their mouth but all looked upward. Sheep driven ahead stood still, the shepherd wished to strike them with his staff but his raised hand remained uplifted. The goats stretched their mouths to the water but drank not. Everything in its course stood still."

In Buddhist literature we have also several parallels to the story in the Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew that at the command of the Christ-child a palm-tree bowed its branches to the earth and offered its fruit, which otherwise was out of reach, to the travel-worn and thirsty Mary. Among these parallels we will consider especially by way of comparison the story of the trees which bent their branches to the help of Māyā the mother of Buddha when her confinement took her by surprise in the open air. The motive of this and similar miraculous accounts is genuinely Indian. However, when Eysinga reaches back to the Veda and wishes to include among the Indian stories of trees which bend their branches the passage in the *Rigveda* where the woods are said to bow from fright before the attack of the Maruts, the companions of Indra,

and the earth and mountains to tremble, this is not correct. In this case we have simply to do with a description of natural phenomena produced by the thunderstorm personified by the Maruts. Entirely different is the fabulous Buddhistic motive of the trees bowing under magical compulsion or from compassion.

In the domain of apocryphal stories of apostles belongs in this connection the account of the missionary activity of St. Thomas. In the Acts of St. Thomas the Apostle, the substance of which dates from the first half of the third century, it is related that Christ sold Thomas as a slave into India in order that he might build a palace for King Gundaphorus who had sent to Jerusalem for a skilled architect. When Thomas spent the money that had been given him for its construction for benevolences among the poor and was to be punished by death by the enraged king he was saved by the declaration that he had built a palace in heaven for the king with these treasures. Thomas then succeeded in converting this king and his brother Gad to Christianity, but was finally executed at the command of King Mesdeus by lance-thrusts after having performed numerous miracles and converted multitudes of people.

Since historically we know nothing more of Thomas than that he was one of the twelve Apostles (whom Wellhausen looks upon as a body instituted after the death of Jesus) this story has been considered from the first to be legendary in its main features. If the activity of St. Thomas in East Persia and the neighboring Indian country is unhistorical, the same is true of the later legends according to which the apostle is supposed to have founded in South India the community of the so-called "Thomas Christians." Since we have learned from coins and from an inscription that a King Gundaphorus, or rather Gondaphares, ruled over Parthia and other East-Iranian districts

as well as the border lands of India, an entire change of view has taken place among French and English-speaking indologists. There the conviction has spread in wide circles, without reference to the facts, that before the middle of the second century Christianity had not succeeded in extending its limits to any great breadth, that that part of the legend which tells of St. Thomas's activities in Parthia and in the northwestern part of India is credible. Not only Sylvain Lévi and Hopkins have given utterance to this effect, but also the English scholars W. R. Philipps, Fleet, Grierson, W. W. Hunter and others. We would protest vigorously against this view. What Alfred von Gutschmid declared in the year 1864 in his famous treatise on "Names of Kings in the Apocryphal Stories of the Apostles"³⁴ still stands to-day. Gutschmid rightly emphasizes the great intrinsic improbability that Christianity could have spread to such a remote territory in so short a time, before it had set a firm foot anywhere in Western Persia, and he adds the further information that the legend of St. Thomas is only a transformed Buddhist missionary story. According to the legend in the *Acta Thomae*, Thomas travels from Jerusalem "by the sea" to the realm of Gondaphares and by this remarkably round-about way reaches the Indian city Andrapolis, that is, the city of the Andhra, a South Indian people who attained great power in the first century of our era and extended their sway to the vicinity of the present Bombay.

The localization of the "Andhra-City" has caused much contention since the more original and somewhat more detailed Syrian text of the Acts of Thomas, which was not yet known in Gutschmid's time, has been discovered and has demonstrated that the Greek version is a translation of the Syrian text. In this the city is called SNDRVK which can not easily be identified with Andrapolis. Since

³⁴ In the *Kleine Schriften*, edited by Franz Rühl, Vol. II, pp. 332 ff.

space forbids a closer investigation of this question here I will only observe, as Professor Th. Nöldeke has kindly informed me, that the only manuscript of the Syrian text belongs to the year 936, hence to a very late time. Therefore a corruption in the name of the city, which can be read Sandarūk, Sandrūk, Sandarök, Sandrök, or even still differently, is certainly not excluded. The Greek translator would hardly have invented the name Andrapolis but may have found an equivalent for it in his Syrian original. Nevertheless even if the consideration against Andrapolis can not be gainsaid and Sandaruk should prove finally to be genuine and to belong in the vicinity of the Indus, still Gutschmid's theory of the transformation of an originally Buddhist story of conversion into the legend of St. Thomas would not be injured in the slightest degree.

According to the legend St. Thomas would have traveled a route perfectly suitable for a Buddhist missionary to have traveled from a sacred spot in Ceylon but not for a Christian apostle coming from Jerusalem before the middle of the first century. Moreover, if we accept all the other evidence brought forward by Gutschmid, especially the fact that exactly in the time mentioned by the Thomas legend White India or Arachosia (hence the very realm of Gondaphares) was actually converted to Buddhism, we can no longer doubt that the Thomas legend is indeed only a remodeled Buddhist history of conversion. This remodeling could hardly have taken place before the beginning of the third century.

In the sixth century the Buddha legend of northern Buddhism had traveled west across Iran in the form of the romance of Barlaam and Joasaph (Greek form; Josaphat in Latin) and on account of the ingenious parables inserted in the romance had found its way into the literature of all Europe. This story tells of the conversion of the Indian Prince Joasaph by the ascetic Barlaam. In both characters

is impersonated the one Buddha. How and why this character has been so doubled is related in Ernst Kuhn's *Barlaam und Joasaph*,³⁵ an essay which bears witness to an astonishingly broad and profound scholarship. Here it is pointed out that Joasaph has originated by the transposition of the Oriental letters in the Indian word Bodhisattva. This romance therefore is of special interest in our investigation because it has given occasion for the adoption of the characters Barlaam and Joasaph among the saints of both the Greek and Roman Catholic churches. In the latter it is first mentioned in a list of saints of the fourteenth century. However it is amusing to note that the Bodhisattva distorted into "Josaphat" is to be found in such strange company, and further that his relics (*Os et pars spinæ dorsi*) have been worshiped in Venice, then in Lisbon and later in Antwerp, and that a church has been erected in Palermo to St. Josaphat.

I have mentioned above the Buddhist Jātakas (page 521). I must now enter more particularly into this literature because the origin of certain Catholic legends to be treated hereafter is to be found in it, and this loan would not be intelligible without some knowledge of the period and character of the sources.

Of particular significance—and indeed not merely for the investigation of the doctrines and conditions of Indian Buddhism—are those tales of edification known by the name Jātaka, in which are related the experiences of the Bodhisattva, the future Buddha. In these "stories of former births" Buddha speaks in his own person and relates in connection with some event or other from his own time, and in application to the situation produced by it, that in a former existence as a man, a fabulous being or an animal, he has had a similar experience. Accordingly Buddha is the hero of all these stories the scenes of which are laid

* Munich, 1893.

in earlier times. If several other individuals or animals appear in the stories those which do just and right things are explained at the conclusion of the tale to be forms of the friends and followers of Buddha in a former existence, the wicked ones are identified with his enemies and opponents. The subject matter of these stories is in part very old, in part the material of later inventions; but the latest hardly extend later than the third century after Christ. A splendid characterization of the Jātaka tales may be found in Oldenberg's "Literature of Ancient India."³⁶

These fanciful and didactic tales recur in great part in the later expository and entertaining literature of India, for they have enjoyed an extraordinary popularity among the Hindus who have always been particularly fond of fairy tales and fables. Many of them have then traveled from their home over Persia, Arabia and Syria farther into the Occident and have become the common property of all Indo-Germanic nations. In interior, northern and eastern Asia too they have spread simultaneously with Buddhism.

The oldest collection of Jātaka tales—and at the same time the earliest source we possess of all Indian fiction³⁷—is written in Pali, the sacred language of the southern Buddhists, and comprises no less than 547 tales. Their earliest ingredients, the verse incorporated among the prose, originated about 400 B. C. while the subject matter itself, as we have already said, is in part much older. We possess a Sanskrit version of 34 of the most favorite of the stories written by Aryasūra in North India under the title *Jātakamālā*, "Cycle of Stories of Former Births"³⁸

³⁶ *Literatur des Alten Indien*, pp. 103-129.

³⁷ Some beginnings found in the Veda we may here leave out of consideration since they have found no continuation in the Jātaka literature.

³⁸ The Pali original of the Jātaka book has been edited by the Danish scholar V. Fausbøll (7 vols., London, 1877-97), and under the direction of E. B. Cowell it has been translated into English by various young indologists (6 vols., Cambridge, 1895-1907). Three volumes of a German translation by the Munich scholar Julius Dutoit have appeared (Leipsic, 1908-1911). Of

The period of this author is not certain, but since another work of Aryasūra's was translated into Chinese in 434 A. D.,³⁹ the Jātakamālā can not have been written later than in the beginning of the fourth century. For in those days one century at least was necessary for a book to become famous enough for its translation into a foreign language to be considered.

Though the Sanskrit Jātakas of Aryasūra must be considered in general as later than the Pali Jātakas, yet the material present in the Sanskrit version is in part as old and in individual cases even more original. I mention this because the circumstance is important in connection with the exposition given below.

A few of the Jātakas have been recognized as the sources of Christian legends of saints.

In the first place the question will be asked, by what route this Buddhist material succeeded in reaching Christian legend lore. In reply we may say that as early as in the beginning of the third century, as we know from Bardesanes and Origen, there were Christians in Parthia, Media, Persia, Bactria and even in northwestern India, that is to say, in lands in which Buddhism had penetrated at a still earlier date. Accordingly, there were in those days Christians who had come into touch with the Buddhist world-conception and civilization; and this has been the case to an even greater degree in the succeeding centuries in other parts of central Asia, especially in Turkestan which through the epoch-making discoveries of Grünwedel, Le Coq, Stein and others we have learned to recognize as the classical land for the mingling of religions.

translations of single parts we shall only mention here the *Buddhist Birth Stories* of T. W. Rhys Davids (Vol. I, London, 1880) which contain the first 40 tales. The *Jātakamālā* has been edited by Hendrik Kern (Boston, 1891) and translated into English by J. S. Speyer (Oxford, 1895).

³⁹ No. 1349 in *Bunyiiu Nanjio's Catalogue of the Chinese Translation of the Buddhist Tripitaka, the Sacred Canon of the Buddhists in China and Japan*, 1883.

The Christians must have been attracted by the extraordinarily mild and beneficent nature of the Buddhist monks whose ethical teachings seemed a surprisingly similar copy of their own views. When all conditions necessary for a closer intercourse were present, interesting stories must have been communicated from one side to the other.

But the Buddhists were established first in the place, and before the Christians arrived they had erected cloisters (*vihāra*) and monuments for relics or memorials (*stūpa*). More than one hundred such stūpas, immense buildings in the form of a hemisphere or bell resting directly upon the ground, have been counted along the ancient Indo-Bactrian royal road beginning from Mankyala on the eastern bank of the Indus.⁴⁰ The Buddhists used to decorate these edifices with pictorial representations of scenes from the favorite Jātakas. Such illustrations we find as early as 200 B. C. on the famous stūpa of Bharhut in the central part of northern India. These reliefs on the stūpas and in the vestibules of Buddhist cloisters certainly made a deep impression on the imagination of the Christians, and must have promoted the borrowing and transformation of Buddhist stories for Christian purposes. But directly and without oral explanations they could not have brought about the birth of the Christian legends.

If besides the familiar story of Barlaam and Joasaph only the two Christian saint legends of which I shall speak later on have hitherto been shown to be transformations of Jātaka stories, I hope that this essay will cause some one of the Catholic scholars intimately acquainted with Christian legend lore to give some study to the Jātaka literature which hitherto has been neglected in this connection. It is very probable that many more sources will be found there either for entire legends of the saints or for some

⁴⁰ See L. von Schroeder's account in *Indiens Literatur und Kultur*, 765, Note, 6.

of their individual features. Particularly suited to this task would be H. Günter, the author of the *Legendenstudien*, who in his latest valuable work on "The Christian Legends of the Occident"⁴¹ has established in a comprehensive manner the sources for the motives of the legends of Christian saints in pre-Christian times without however taking Buddhism into consideration.

I. ST. EUSTACHIUS (EUSTATHIUS) PLACIDUS.⁴²

The legend of St. Eustace, whose memory has been celebrated in the Roman church since the sixth century, divides naturally into two parts: the first treats of his wonderful conversion,⁴³ the second of his sufferings and martyr death.

Placidus (in the Greek text *Plakidas*) was the highest commander under Trajan and stood in great favor with the emperor. He was a very virtuous man of a mild and gentle disposition but brave and a great hunter. By his wife Tatiana, who like himself clung to the pagan faith, he had two sons whose childhood was surrounded by the splendor of their father's position. One day Placidus went out hunting and came upon a herd of deer among which he saw one of conspicuous beauty. This one left the herd, enticed Placidus away from his companions into the densest thicket of the forest and then remained standing above a rocky abyss. As Placidus approached the stag he saw between the lofty antlers a bright sparkling cross with the picture of the Saviour. The stag (according to one version

⁴¹ *Die christliche Legende des Abendlands*. Heidelberg, 1910.

⁴² M. Gaster, "The Nigrodha-miga-Jātaka and the Life of Saint Eustathius Placidus" in the *Journal of the R. A. S. of Great Britain and Ireland*, 1894, pp. 335-340 (cf. also 1893, pp. 869-871); J. G. Speyer, "Buddhistische elementen in eenige episoden uit de legenden van St. Hubertus en St. Eustachius," *Theologisch Tijdschrift*, 40, Leyden, 1906, pp. 427-453.

⁴³ This is related by John of Damascus who lived in the eighth century. Stadler and Heim, *Vollständiges Heiligen-Lexikon*, II, 129, Speyer, 431. This legend must therefore have been known still earlier in the Byzantine world. On page 435 Speyer places the Greek text of the *Vita Eustathii* in the *Acta Sanctorum* (Sept. 20) in the fifth century.

the Saviour from the cross) raised his voice and said: "Placidus, why pursuest thou me? I am Christ whom thou worshipest without knowing it. Go back to the city and be baptized." Placidus returned to his home, told his wife what had happened to him, and that same night was baptized by the bishop of Rome together with his wife and children. In baptism he received the name Eustachius or, as in the Greek text, Eustathius.

This legend of conversion by means of a stag with the crucifix was later transferred to other saints, Hubert, Fantinus, Julian, Felix of Valois, and several others.⁴⁴ The best known of these is St. Hubert, but in his biography the appearance of Christ in the form of a stag is not nearly so well accounted for as in the original story of St. Eustace.

The second part of the Eustace legend takes up much more space in the original sources than the first, but here it will be sufficient to give a brief summary. The period of Eustace's suffering and probation begins when he loses all his property and when all his slaves, both male and female, die of the plague. Since he is ashamed to live in utter poverty in the place where previously he had been rich and highly honored, he wanders out with his wife and two young sons to Egypt. Because he has not enough money to pay for the passage the skipper permits him and his sons to disembark but seizes upon his beautiful wife whom he retains as a slave. Soon afterwards Eustace loses both his sons who are seized by wild animals, one by a lion and the other by a wolf, while fording a river. In utter abandonment Eustace earns a livelihood as a day laborer. After fifteen years Trajan remembers his old general, for he has need of his help to suppress an uprising, and causes him to be sought throughout the entire Roman Empire. In spite of his wretched condition Eustace is recognized and brought back to Rome where he again

⁴⁴ Speyer, 430, 434; Günter, *Legendenstudien*, 38, 39.

assumes command of the troops whom he leads to victory over the rebels. Upon this expedition he finds in a village on the bank of the Hydaspes(!) not only his wife, who in spite of all temptations had remained faithful and pious, but also both his sons for they had not been swallowed by the beasts but were rescued by peasants. The victorious general returns to Rome with his family and is received with great friendliness by Hadrian who in the meantime has succeeded Trajan. However, when Hadrian learns that his general refuses to offer sacrifices in the temple of Apollo and confesses that he is a Christian, he falls into a rage and commands Eustace and his wife and children to be thrown to the wild beasts. But the lion who was set upon the martyrs in the arena would not touch them, so Hadrian compelled them to be thrown into a red hot iron bull where, although they met their death, yet not a hair of their heads was singed. When three days later the people wished to remove their remains the four corpses were found uninjured and shone brighter than snow—a miracle which made the most profound impression on the spectators including Hadrian.

The most remarkable thing about this legend is the fabulous feature of the Saviour appearing in the form of a talking stag which is entirely foreign to Christian conceptions. The attempt to refer this motive to ancient folklore⁴⁵ or to explain it by reference to early Christian symbolism can not be considered as successful. In Wetzzer and Welte's *Kirchenlexikon*⁴⁶ we read: "As the passage in Psalms xlii. 2 compares the longing of the soul for God to the panting of the hart after the water brooks, so early Christian art took up this idea and enriched it by reference to John iv. 13, so that the stag became the image of the believer's soul which thirsteth for streams of grace obtainable through Christ." At this Speyer justly observes that neither this

⁴⁵ Günter, *Legendenstudien*, 38.

⁴⁶ S. v. "Hirsch"; Speyer, 436.

figurative language nor the use made in early Christian art of the symbol of the stag as a characterization of the soul longing for the grace of God or baptism can be used for the explanation of the cross-bearing stag of the legend of St. Eustace, for in this legend the stag does not stand for the soul thirsting for Christ but represents Christ himself.

Whatever seems puzzling in the appearance of the Saviour in this animal form disappears when we recognize that we have here to do with a transformation of a Buddhist Jātaka tale. That Buddha was an animal in his former existences and several times the king of stags is a genuine Buddhistic idea occurring frequently in the Jātakas.

The direct source of the first part of the legend of St. Eustace is Jātaka 12 in the Pali collection. The discovery was made independently by two scholars and this fact certainly speaks in favor of the correctness of the observation: first by the Englishman Gaster in 1893, and then by the eminent Dutch Sanskritist Speyer who knew nothing of Gaster's article mentioned above in Note 42, when in the year 1906 he developed and placed on a surer foundation the same thought from a careful investigation of the earliest Greek text of the legend of St. Eustace in the *Acta Sanctorum*.

That the Jātaka just mentioned with the title Nigrodhamiga-jātaka, "The Story of the Fig-Tree Stag,"⁴⁷ is sufficiently old to be looked upon as the source for the first part of the legend of St. Eustace, there is no doubt. The story was widely known as early as the third century B. C., for there are three scenes from it represented in a relief on the stūpa of Bharhut mentioned on page 537.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ The word *miga* means "stag" as well as roe and gazelle and is usually translated as gazelle. When Dutoit in Note 3 to Jātakam I, 64, renders *nigrodha* as "banana-tree" he confuses the word "banyan" as used by the English, which is a name for the *ficus indica*, with "banana."

⁴⁸ See the illustration in Rhys Davids's *Buddhist India*, London, 1903, 193.

For the following account of the Jātaka story I have utilized the translation of Dutoit with a few alterations and omissions.*

* * *

Once on a time when Brahmadata was reigning in Benares, the Bodhisattva was reincarnated as a stag. At his birth he was golden of hue; his eyes were like round jewels; the sheen of his horns was as of silver; his mouth was red as a bunch of scarlet cloth; his fore hoofs were as though lacquered; his tail was like the yak's and he was as big as a young foal. Attended by five hundred deer, he dwelt in the forest under the name of King Nigrodha (Banyan) Stag. And hard by him dwelt another stag-king, also with an attendant herd of 500 deer who was named Sākha, and was as golden of hue as the Bodhisattva.

In those days the King of Benares was passionately fond of hunting and always had meat at every meal. Every day he mustered the whole of his subjects, townsfolk and countryfolk alike, to the detriment of their business, and went hunting. Thought the people, "This king of ours stops all our work. Let us supply food and water for the deer in his own pleasure, and, having driven in a number of deer, bar them in and deliver them over to the king." And so they did. All the townsfolk got together and drove the herds of the Nigrodha Stag and the Sākha Stag into the royal pleasure and closed the gate.

The king betook himself to the pleasure, and in looking over the herd saw among them two golden deer to whom he granted immunity; sometimes he would go of his own accord and shoot a deer to bring home; sometimes his cook would go and shoot one. At first sight of the bow the deer would dash off trembling for their lives, but after receiving two or three wounds they grew weary and faint

* The English is mainly that of Robert Chalmers (Cowell ed.) except in those slight points in which his translation varies from Dutoit's.—Tr,

and died. The herd of deer told this to the Bodhisattva who sent for Sākha and said: "Friend, the deer are being destroyed in great numbers, and though they can not escape death let them not be needlessly wounded. Let the deer go to the butcher's block by turns, one day one from my herd and next day one from thine; the deer on whom the lot falls shall go to the place of execution and lie down with his head on the block." To this the other agreed.

Now one day the lot fell on a pregnant doe of the herd of Sākha, and she went to Sākha and said, "Lord, I am with young; order me to be passed over." "No, I can not make thy turn another's," said he. Finding no favor with him the doe went on to the Bodhisattva and told him her story. He answered, "Very well; go thy way, and I will see that the turn passes over thee." And therewithal he went himself and laid his head upon the block. Cried the cook on seeing him, "Why here is the king of the deer who was granted immunity! What does this mean?" And off he ran to tell the king. The moment he heard of it the king mounted his chariot and arrived with a large following. "My friend, king of the deer," he said on beholding the Bodhisattva, "did I not grant thee immunity? How comes it that thou liest here?" The Bodhisattva replied, "O great king, there came to me a doe big with young, who prayed me to let her turn fall on another; and as I could not pass the doom on to another, I have taken her doom on myself and have laid me down here."

"My lord, golden king of the deer," said the king, "Never yet saw I even among men one so abounding in charity, love and pity as thou art. Therefore am I well pleased with thee. Arise! I spare both thy life and hers."

"Though two be spared what shall become of the rest, O king of men?" "I spare their lives too, my lord." And thus the Bodhisattva proceeded to gain from the king the further promise that he would spare also all deer outside

of the pleasaunce, then all other four-footed creatures, and finally all birds and fishes.

After thus interceding with the king for the lives of all creatures, the "Great Being" arose, instructed the king in the Five Commandments, saying, "Walk in righteousness, great king. If thou walkst in righteousness and justice towards parents, children, townspeople, and countryfolk, thou wilt enter the bliss of heaven when this earthly body is dissolved." Thus with the grace and charm of a Buddha did he preach the law to the king. A few days he tarried in the pleasaunce, instructed the king once more, and then with his attendant herd he passed again into the forest. The king abode by the Bodhisattva's teachings, and after a life spent in good works passed away to fare according to his merits.

* * *

The points of agreement between this story and the legend of St. Eustace are so manifold that they can not rest on chance. The most important features are absolutely identical.⁴⁹ The king Brahmadatta and Placidus are both passionately fond of hunting. Both in spite of this trait are gentle in disposition but have not yet accepted the true doctrine. Both meet the Saviour of the world (in the Buddhist story it is the future Saviour) in the form of a splendid stag—in the Jātaka with silver-colored horns, in the Christian legend with the crucifix between his horns. In both stories the stag subjects himself to the danger of being slain in order to point out to Brahmadatta and Placidus respectively the way to salvation. Both Brahmadatta and Placidus become converted through the stag and as a result attain heavenly bliss.

In all investigations relating to the dependence of one story upon another, correspondences in incidental features, which for the course of the story are quite insignificant,

⁴⁹ Gaster, 337, 340.

have a special importance. I would like therefore to call attention to one such similarity which hitherto has escaped observation.

In the Nigrodha-miga-jātaka the Bodhisattva after his decisive conversation with the king repeats his exhortation on a later day without any visible reason and probably only because Buddhist texts are fond of repetitions. We find exactly this same feature, but in Christian coloring, in the legend of St. Eustace. The Greek text relates that Christ, appearing thus in the form of a stag, requires Placidus to come again the next day after he has received baptism to the same place in order to learn what God requires of him further. On coming back Placidus learns that severe tests await him, but that if he victoriously withstands all temptations he will share in the supreme reward of heaven.

Here we ask in vain what the purpose of this second meeting may be, for what is revealed to Placidus there might equally well have been told at the first meeting. No other explanation for this repetition can be found except that this particular circumstance was taken over from the Buddhist source.

Whoever after all this still doubts the dependence of the legend of St. Eustace upon the Nigrodha-miga-jātaka may put aside his last hesitation when he learns that there is also a source for the second part of the legend in Jātaka literature.

When Gaster and Speyer, the two discoverers of the Buddhist origin of the legend of St. Eustace, point to two different stories as the prototype in this case—the first to the story of Patācārā, the second to that of Visvantara—it does not greatly matter, for the story of Patācārā who loses her husband and her two children (the latter while fording a river⁵⁰ as in the story of Eustace) is a twig off

⁵⁰ One of Patācārā's children is drowned and the other is seized by an

the same branch from which the Visvantara story is also derived. Its material is changed into the feminine form for the glorification of a woman who belongs to the saints (Arhat) of the Buddhist church.

Speyer looks upon the story of Visvantara (Sanskrit) or Vessantara (Pali) as the proper source of the second part of the legend of St. Eustace, and this tale is better known and more widely spread among the Buddhists than any other except the life of Buddha himself. Since this story is pictorially represented on the Boro Budor, the most famous Buddhist monument in Java, we may assume that such representations also extended into other Buddhist lands at the time when the story became Christianized. In Tibet it is a favorite subject for dramatic representation even to-day.

The substance of the story⁵¹ is mainly as follows: In his last earthly existence before the final one, the Bodhi-sattva was born as Prince Visvantara, son of King Sanjaya in Jayaturā (Pali Jetuttera) the capital of the country of the Sibi. In order to become Buddha in a future life and to bring salvation to the world from the sufferings of continuous existence, the prince constantly endeavored to fulfil every request made of him and to give away everything that belonged to him. One day an embassy came from the distant realm Kalinga suffering from drought and famine to beseech Visvantara to send them his white elephant that possessed the faculty of bringing rain. The prince at once acceded to this request, expressing the regret that the messengers had not demanded of him, for instance, his flesh

eagle (*Journal of the R. A. S.*, 1893, 554, 558). This detail from the story of Patācārā is evidently the source for the similar feature of the St. Eustace legend.

⁵¹ In the Pali collection of the Jātakas the rather extensive Vessantara Jātaka is the last, No. 547. Its substance is exhaustively related by Spence Hardy in his *Manual of Buddhism*, 116 ff., and by Heinrich Kern in *Der Buddhismus und seine Geschichte in Indien*, I, 388 ff.; briefly also by Oldenberg, *Buddha*, 5th ed., 355. In the Jātakamālā of Aryaśūra the Visvantara Jātaka is No. 9.

or his eyes. But his people did not at all approve of the loss of the elephant which was of so much use to them and compelled the king to banish the prince for punishment in the wilderness on Mount Vanka. The prince's wife insisted upon sharing his lot together with their two children.

On the next morning Visvantara called the beggars together and divided all his possessions among them. On his way to exile he bestowed upon needy people who applied to him even the horses and carriage with which he and his family were riding away, and continued his journey on foot up rough paths in the glowing heat of the sun. Dressed as ascetics the four lived on Mount Vanka in huts of foliage and fed upon the fruits of the forest.

After seven months a loathsome old Brahman came that way and begged the prince to give him his two children to serve him. And the father, the "Great Being" was greatly rejoiced to have the opportunity to give something more valuable than anything previous and gave away the two weeping children whom the old Brahman drove away with blows. Then the earth quaked, lightning flashed and thunder resounded in the air and all the gods rejoiced because the Great Being by renouncing his beloved children had done what was necessary for the attainment of Buddhahood. Even their own mother, who returned from a search for fruit to find her children gone, comforted herself with the thought that a greater gift than his own children could no man give.

On the next day Indra, the King of Heaven, came to the obviously sensible conclusion: "Yesterday Visvantara gave away his children and the earth trembled. Now if a common man came to ask him for his incomparably virtuous wife and took her with him then the prince would be helpless and abandoned. Well then I will assume the form of a Brahman and ask Visvantara for his wife. Thus I will put him in a position to attain the highest stage of

perfection; but at the same time I will make it impossible for his wife to be given to any one else and then I will give her back." The prince willingly handed over his wife to the supposed Brahman and again the whole universe shared joyously by similar miraculous phenomena in this unprecedented self-denial. But Indra said, "Now the princess belongs to me and what belongs to another mayst thou not give away," made himself known to the prince and restored his wife to him.

In the meantime the steps of the old Brahman to whom the two children had been given, were turned by the gods to the capital Jayaturā, and there the Brahman was compelled to deliver the children to their grandfather, the king, for a high purchase price. And since the people of Kalinga of their own accord had sent back the white elephant that brought the rain because now there was abundance in their land, the reason for the banishment of the prince had disappeared. King Sanjaya set out with the two children and an immense following to Mount Vanka and brought home his son amid great pomp and the shouts of the people.

This story exhibits the following agreements with the second part of the legend of St. Eustace:⁵² Both Visvantara and Eustace belong to the mighty ones of earth. Both lose position and wealth, wife and children. Both go into exile whereat one—according to the highest ideal of Buddhist ethics—surrenders everything even to the last and dearest, while the other—according to the Christian conception—is tested by God by means of the loss of his property and family and by afflictions. Visvantara too submits to a test, and indeed by Indra, the king of heaven, who had already played the part of the testing God in earlier existences of the Bodhisattva and this time in the form

⁵² Speyer, 450, 451.

of a Brahman demands his wife of him. Visvantara and Eustace receive back what they have lost.

In supposing that the Visvantara Jātaka has been used in the Christian legend we must assume two things: (1) that the Indian tale went through several transformations in the western countries among the Persians, Syrians and Greeks according as its Christianization demanded, for Eustace could not very well give away his wife and children to beggars but must lose them in some other way; (2) that in the course of these transformations it has also been enriched by motives from other Buddhist stories.⁵³

However I can bring forward a proof which has not occurred to either Gaster or Speyer but seems to me to be decisive, of the fact that in reality the story of Visvantara has served as a source for the second part of the legend of St. Eustace, and that we do not have here simply an accidental coincidence.

The rebellion which Placidus was called back by Trajan to suppress had broken out in a remote eastern portion of the realm, and on this expedition the victorious commander regained his wife and children in a village on the bank of the Hydaspes as has been mentioned before on page 540. In that passage I placed an exclamation point after Hydaspes, because the vicinity of Hydaspes, the Punjab, lies so far outside the boundaries of the Roman Empire that it betrays complete thoughtlessness on the part of the author of the Greek life of St. Eustace to place a rebellion against Trajan and the expedition of Placidus in that quarter. For us however this thoughtlessness is of great value; for if by disregarding it we have hitherto been able to look upon the Visvantara Jātaka only as very probably the source of the second part of the Eustace legend, the correctness of this view can not be better confirmed than by reference to the fact that the scene of the

⁵³ See Note 50.

Buddhist tale has been transferred in an entirely mechanical way to the Christianized redaction where it stands as an impossibility. The father of Visvantara is king in the land of the Sibi (Pali *Sivi*, Greek *Σίβαι*), and these people lived between the Indus and Hydaspes. In the exact spot where Visvantara regains his wife and children, and where according to the scene of the whole story he must find them, Eustace also finds his wife and his sons, whereas according to the setting of the Christian story he would never have been able to find them there. In this particular no one will be able to see here a play of chance, especially in consideration of all the other similarities.

For the conclusion of the Christian legend, the martyrdom of St. Eustace and his family, we naturally may not look for a Buddhist source. It is a matter of course that we have here to deal with an independent addition of the Christian redactor.

ST. CHRISTOPHER.⁵⁴

The original Greek redaction of the legend of St. Christopher has been placed by Günter⁵⁵ in the sixth century. Before his conversion this saint was called *Ῥέπρεβος*, by the Greeks and "Reprobus" by the Latins who also called the king appearing in this legend Dagnus of Samos in Lycia; in the Greek text he is called *Δέκιος βασιλεύς*, that is to say, he bears the name of the typical persecutor of the Christians. This king can not be identified with any historical personage.

A medieval source, which reflects clearly earlier ideas, relates that the man who later became Christopher was a

⁵⁴ J. S. Speyer, "De indische oorsprong van den Heiligen Reus Sint Christophorus" (*Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië*, Zevende Volgreeds, Negende Deel. Deel LXIII der geheele Reeks. 'S-Gravenhage, 1910, pp. 368 ff.).

⁵⁵ *Legendenstudien*, 25.

giant 12 ells in height, that he had a dog's head and came from the land of cannibals. In Latin sources he is known as Cananæus.

Conscious of his own monstrous strength the giant wished to serve only the mightiest of earth and therefore took service with a powerful king. But when he saw that the king was afraid of the devil he transferred his allegiance to the latter, and finally, because the devil in his turn trembled before the image of the Saviour, he wished to serve Christ as the most powerful of all. Nevertheless he could not receive baptism because he refused to perform the required penances, and therefore was commissioned to serve as ferryman for poor pilgrims and to carry them across a river on his shoulders.

One day a child came to him to be carried across. As the giant waded through the river his burden became constantly heavier and heavier, and finally in response to the question of the giant who knew not what was befalling him, disclosed himself to be the master of the world. Then the real conversion of the giant was completed and he was baptized by immersion in the water. At baptism the giant received the name Christopher, "Christbearer." So the saint is often represented in Christian art, especially in the vestries of churches, as striding through the water with the Christ-child on his shoulders.

The legend goes on to tell that Christopher converted many heathens in Lycia, particularly by having a staff burst forth with leaves and flowers, and for his activity he was thrown into prison by King Dagnus and was sentenced to undergo the death of a martyr. Even during his martyrdom he converted many thousands. After he had been scourged with iron rods they tried in vain to roast him upon a grate and to kill him with arrows, but the arrows were driven from their mark by violent winds.

Finally Christopher was beheaded. The first mention of his martyrdom occurs in the seventh century.⁵⁶

This legend contains nothing remarkable in the martyrdom which is typical in the stories of the saints, nevertheless the rest of the subject matter is highly singular and without analogies in the lives of the saints. Since an historical foundation for the tale is out of the question the attempt has been made to follow Luther's lead and interpret it allegorically. Since such explanations were not satisfactory and the notion arose that an ancient popular pagan personality was hidden in the form of the giant of the legend, Germanic scholars thought of Thor and others of Heracles.

These combinations, however, were not sufficient to explain the strange, fabulous and obviously ancient feature of the legend that St. Christopher was a giant with a dog's head and originally a cannibal. Only by making this feature a starting-point of investigation could the origin of the legend be discovered. An ancient source must be found containing a giant of the kind described and in which, moreover, this giant carries the Saviour of the world upon his shoulders and is converted by him; for this episode is the center and kernel of the Christian legend even though it does not appear at all in the Greek texts nor in the Latin before the thirteenth century.⁵⁷

Günter indeed is of the opinion that the character of Christ-bearer which later belonged to the saint has been constructed solely upon the ground of a realistic verbal interpretation. Certainly Günter will not adhere to this view when he learns that exactly this feature of the Saviour-bearer plays an important rôle in the story of an animal-headed giant in the prototype we shall discuss later.

⁵⁶ Stadler and Heim, *Vollständiges Heiligen-Lexikon*, I, 610; *Kirchliches Handlexikon*, edited by Michael Buchberger, I, 926; *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, edited by Schiele, I, 1783.

⁵⁷ Speyer, 381; Günter, *Legendenstudien*, 25.

Far less acceptable than Günter's interpretation appears that of Richter⁵⁸ who makes the bold statement: "We were of the opinion that there was some reason to assume that the Christ-bearer was an offspring of German imagination and German fancy. It may perhaps be said from a more general standpoint that only German religious sentiment could invent a Christopher." It is to be regretted that German patriotism should occasionally put forth such outgrowths in the field of science for which foreign scholars in the most favorable instance can have only an ironical smile.

Before I enter into the source of the Christopher legend, the question must certainly be settled as to whether the *late testimony* of the Christ-bearer element can really be a reason for considering *this feature itself* as a late one. I believe that Speyer has rightly answered this question in the negative in the essay mentioned above in Note 54. He specifies (page 382) that the absence of earlier literary evidence for the judgment of this case is not of decisive significance since much original material has been lost and the church naturally felt most interest in the martyrdom so that other ancient features fell in the background. Moreover Speyer emphasizes that besides literary sources the testimony of art, that is to say, of sculpture and painting, called for consideration and that this seemed to bespeak a greater age for the Christ-bearer; for the development of Christopher with the Christ-child in the history of art points to ancient tradition and Byzantine prototypes. Thus most scholars who have occupied themselves with the story of St. Christopher consider his character of Christ-bearer an essential and original element of the tale. In no case is the antiquity and originality of the giant and cannibal and the dog's head to be doubted. These three features can not be made to fit in the picture of the hero of Christian faith,

⁵⁸ "Der deutsche Christoph," *Acta Germanica*, V (1896) 146; Speyer, 380.

least of all the dog's head. Whence, then, do they originate?

Speyer has answered this question in a convincing manner by pointing out the Jātaka⁵⁹ dealing with Prince Sutasoma as the source of the legend of St. Christopher.

The following summary of the Jātaka story is in the main a translation of Speyer's combined presentation (pp. 383-384):

Once upon a time when a king by the name Kauravya ruled over the people of the Kuru, the Bodhisattva was reincarnated as his son and was given the name Sutasoma. Like a genuine fairy-tale prince he was inconceivably rich and at the same time virtuous, of boundless charity, mildness and gentleness—in short just what the future Buddha who never lost sight of his aim would have to be. In his piety he took the greatest pleasure in listening to and appropriating ingenious sayings of a religious and moral character.

One day when strolling about in the park near his palace with a few attendants and enjoying the spring splendor of the young verdure and the opening flowers, he was informed that a foreign Brahman had arrived who knew many such sayings and wished to recite them to him. The prince wished to go to him at once but servants came suddenly running up with the terrifying news that the frightful cannibal had appeared in the park and was looking for the prince. This monster, Kalmāshapāda by name, had once been a king but had been changed by a curse into a man-eating demon with an animal's face. He had promised his bloodthirsty guardian goddess to sacrifice one hundred princes to her. He had already collected ninety-nine and now Sutasoma was to be the hundredth.

⁵⁹ In the Pali collection No. 537 (Mahā-Sutasoma-jātaka); in the Jātaka-mālā No. 31. For good reasons, though without comment, Speyer has combined the two accounts of the Pali and Sanskrit texts because single features of the latter may in this case be regarded not only as just as old and genuine as those of the more detailed Pali version, but also as more original.

Hardly had the threatening danger been announced to the prince when the giant stood before him. His attendants were frightened to death and fled in every direction; Sutasoma alone did not lose his presence of mind. He stepped up to the cannibal and permitted himself to be lifted up and placed upon his shoulders without opposition. Even when the giant ran quickly away with him he felt no terror. Not until he arrived in the horrible dwelling of the cannibal filled with human skeletons and skulls did tears rise to his eyes. This behavior astonished the monster. He asked the prince why he all at once began to weep, whether such a wise and sensible prince still felt a longing for the world which lay behind him or whether he feared death. "Oh no," replied the Bodhisattva, "Not for such reasons do I weep, but because I am deprived of the opportunity of hearing the beautiful sayings of wisdom from the mouth of the Brahman who still sits waiting for me. If thou wilt allow me to return once more to my palace I could satisfy the wish of the Brahman and my own. After I have heard what he has to say I will return to thee again, I promise thee." The cannibal was greatly astonished at this request and at first did not know what to make of it. Then he yielded to the charm which the Bodhisattva exercised upon every one with whom he came in contact. He granted the prince's request, thinking that if the latter did not return he could console himself.

But the Bodhisattva did not permit himself to be restrained by the entreaties of his relatives and friends and returned to the giant. Meanwhile the giant who saw him coming had become curious about the fine sayings which the Brahman had recited to the prince, but the prince would not communicate them to the cannibal saying, "Thou art much too wicked and too great a malefactor; only good and pious people may hear them."

Thus began a long conversation in the course of which

Sutasoma brought about a complete transformation in the soul of the giant. The monster turned over a new leaf, promised to lead a better life and never more to eat human flesh. He released the captured princes and, cured of all his wicked passions, received again his kingdom. Sutasoma likewise returned safe and sound to his own people.



SUTASOMA AND THE GIANT—A BUDDHIST ST. CHRISTOPHER.

From the plates of C. Seeman's work on *Boro-Boedoer*, CLXV, No. 117; page 320 of the text.

This Jātaka contains two features which if looked upon as the source of the Christopher legend will explain its fabulous and miraculous content: (1) the Bodhisattva converts a cannibal with the head of a beast;⁶⁰ (2) the can-

⁶⁰ The "*dierlijk aangezicht*" mentioned by Speyer surely refers to the description of the Jātakamālā (p. 210, lines 16 and 17 in Kern's edition): "His hair was covered with dirt and hung down in disorder over his face which was covered also by a long tangled beard as if by darkness." Indeed this is a description which in its pictorial representation would greatly resemble the head of a dog.

nibal carries the Bodhisattva on his shoulders and hurries away with him. The distinctions between the two narratives are explained by the difference between the Christian and Buddhist manner of thought. Whoever would deem this difference too great to recognize the Jātaka as the prototype of the Christian legend should note that in this case the pictorial representations of this favorite tale of the Buddhists must have been of particular significance for their transference to the Christian world.

On the Boro Budor⁶¹ the story of Sutasoma is given in four reliefs one of which shows the giant placing the prince upon his shoulders. There is no doubt that pictorial representations of this story as well as of many other Jātaka tales were located in great number in Buddhist cloisters and stūpas not only in far-away Java but also in western lands.

Speyer even denies an internal connection between the Sutasoma story and the Christopher legend and founds his proof entirely upon the effect of the pictorial representations. He thinks that the Christians would have interpreted the picture in which the giant is carrying Prince Sutasoma on his shoulders in their own way. It seems to me that such a disconnection of literary influence goes too far. Christians would never have been able to have derived the material for the legend of St. Christopher solely from pictures. This would only have been possible when the Buddhists gave them the explanation that the man carried by the giant was the future Saviour of the world. And when the Buddhists had once told this they would certainly also tell in their well-known loquaciousness the whole story which was then worked over by the Christians. Without the assumption of the influence of the *story* the dependence of the Christopher legend upon the Buddhist source would to me be unintelligible.

⁶¹ See page 546.

I believe I can produce a new reason for this dependence which Speyer has not brought forward. According to the Pali version of the Jātaka, the cannibal lay in ambush to steal the prince, and for this purpose he stepped into a pool of water within the royal park and hid his head under a lotus leaf, seizing the prince just as he stepped out of the pool after bathing. Hence according to the Pali Jātaka the cannibal placed the prince on his shoulders *on the bank of an expanse of water* as Christopher did the Saviour in the Christian legend. Then too the landscape may have been visible in the background in the Buddhist pictures. This correspondence of scenery seems to me to be not unessential, since this incident of the Buddhist prototype—and incidents unimportant in themselves are always of particular significance in questions of loan—explains the Christian feature in which the giant strides through the river, for which only a slight working over and addition was required. This conception seems to me closer to the facts than Speyer's notion (page 388) that the river which St. Christopher fords with the Christ-child has its origin in the current Buddhistic simile in which earthly life is compared to a river upon the farther side of which lies the haven of salvation.

On the other hand I agree with Speyer when he answers the question as to how Christ came to be represented in the legend as *a child* by saying that this conception has been derived from the relation of the burden to the bearer as shown in the pictorial representation of the Buddhist tale. The tiny figure which is carried by the giant made the impression of a child upon the spectator.

Speyer closes his interesting essay with the words: "*Habent sua fata . . . anthropophagi!*" Seldom at any rate will anybody make so splendid a career as the man-eating giant of the Indian fairy-tale who has become one of the best-known saints of Catholic Christendom.

The transmissions from the Buddhist to the Christian world discussed in this paper and which must be placed from the third to the sixth centuries, are apt in my opinion to throw light upon the coincidences in the forms of worship of the two religions which have long attracted attention. The following elements of worship are common to Buddhism and Christianity: cloisters with their monachism and the distinction between novices and ordained monks and nuns, the celibacy and tonsure of the clergy, confession, veneration of relics, the rosary, the shepherd's crook in the Buddhist and Catholic churches, the church spires paralleled by the towerlike reliquaries and stūpas of the Buddhists, and the use of incense and bells.⁶²

The great theological works of reference in both Christian confessions make practically no mention of these coincidences even in their more detailed articles, and explain all of the above-named phenomena on the Christian side as genuine and independent outgrowths of Christianity. Nevertheless the correspondence with the external forms of the Buddhist church are so numerous and so close that it is difficult indeed to regard them as the play of chance. Likewise it can hardly be made to seem credible that all these phenomena have arisen from similar intellectual tendencies conditioned by the nature of both religions and independently of each other. If we consider that they are collectively older in Buddhism than in Christianity, and that from the beginning of the third century Christians were acquainted with them in the same localities in which we must assume the loan of the Buddhist legendary material—that is, in Persia, Bactria and Turkestan—then we are justified in asking why the externalities of the religious life of Buddhism may not have served the Christians as a

⁶² R. Spence Hardy, *Eastern Monachism*, London, 1850; Peter von Bohlen, *Das alte Indien*, I, 334-350; A. Weber, *Indische Skizzen* (Berlin, 1857), 58, 64, 65, 92; *Ueber die Krishnajanmashtami* (*Krishna's Geburtsfest*), Berlin, 1868, p. 340.

model as well as Buddhist edificatory tales. To my knowledge there is no historical evidence which contradicts the assumption that these above-named elements of worship have been borrowed from Buddhism by Christianity.

The first cloister-like colonies of Christian anchorites have been traced to the Egyptian desert in the fourth century, and hence Egypt is regarded as the cradle of Christian monasticism."⁶³ But almost as early—even at the beginning of the last quarter of the fourth century—we find it in other Oriental countries, especially in Syria where it quickly arose to a flourishing condition. The monks on the mountains around Antioch devoted themselves as early as towards the end of the fourth century to the education of young manhood.⁶⁴ Although the prevailing theory is that monasticism spread there from the small beginnings in upper Egypt, this does not seem to me probable. Grützmacher⁶⁵ at least raises the question whether Christian monasticism is as autochthonous to Syria as to Egypt and says that it cannot be positively asserted. "Autochthonous," however, means to Grützmacher only the possibility that Christian monasticism may have developed in Syria from the early Christian asceticism without Egyptian influence. The other possibility, that Buddhist influence might have made itself felt from the neighboring countries on the east, in which at that time Buddhism had spread with its cloisters and its monks, does not occur to him. To me nothing seems more probable than this.

⁶³ The view held by H. Weingarten and Albrecht Dieterich that Christian monasticism was derived from the Serapis hermits has been completely refuted by Erwin Preuschen in his *Mönchtum und Serapiskult* (2d ed., Giessen, 1903) and henceforth may be considered as settled once for all. The attempt of Hilgenfeld (*Zeitschrift für wissenschaftliche Theologie*, 1878, 149) to derive the beginnings of Christian monasticism in Egypt from Buddhism is overthrown by the fact that Buddhist influence on Egypt can not be proved.

⁶⁴ F. X. Kraus, *Real-Encyclopädie der christlichen Altertümer*, II, 406.

⁶⁵ In *Herzogs Realencyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche*, 3d ed., XIII, 221.

The requirement of celibacy among the clergy first appeared in the Christian church in the fourth century, but met continued opposition for seven hundred years until it finally became law in the eleventh century under Gregory VII. The tonsure as a distinguishing mark of the clergy first occurs at the end of the fourth or beginning of the fifth century, and was originally bestowed at the time of ordination as an accompanying ceremony⁶⁶ just as in Buddhism.⁶⁷ Confession, one of the oldest institutions of Buddhist communal life, did not enter into Christianity until the third century.

Veneration of relics does not occur in Christianity before the latter half of the third or the beginning of the fourth century; in the middle of the fourth, the custom of dividing the remains of martyrs, instead of burying them, in order to give a share of them to as many as possible, appears to have been general *in the Orient*.⁶⁸ This custom has prevailed in Buddhism from the earliest times. As early as in the year 477 B. C. the relics of Buddha's body were divided among several princes of the faith.

There can no longer be any serious doubt as to the Buddhist origin of the rosary, which has usually been assumed to have first been brought to Europe by the crusaders. The Buddhists have the rosary in common with Brahman sects; with the former it consists of one hundred and eight beads and has come into general use in northern Buddhism. Albrecht Weber offers a plausible explanation of the word "rosary" (*rosarium*; German *Rosenkranz*, "garland of roses") which had seemed unintelligible. According to his view the name is a mistaken translation of the Indian word *japamālā*, "garland of prayer," which

⁶⁶ Sägmüller, *Lehrbuch des kath. Kirchenrechts*, I, 150.

⁶⁷ But it must not be overlooked that in Egypt since antiquity the shaving of the head was customary among the priests of Isis and of Serapis. *Herzogs Realencyklopädie*, 3d ed., XIX, 837.

⁶⁸ *Op. cit.*, XVI, 631, 632.

was wrongly interpreted as *japāmālā*, "garland of roses" (*japā* = prayer; *japā* = rose).

As to the use of the spire in Christian architecture, such early investigators as Ricci (1857) and Unger (1860) found its prototype in India and Persia where in their opinion the cradle of Christian tower-construction is to be sought.⁶⁹ Ancient Byzantine architecture is very closely related to that of the Buddhists, especially in Armenia.⁷⁰ The use of incense was condemned downright by the earliest Christians because it called too much to mind the pagan worship;⁷¹ it was first introduced into the Christian church during the fourth century. The use of the bell in religious service is not traceable in Christianity until rather late. Gregory of Tours (died 595) is the first positive authority for it. In the first centuries when the Christians were subject to the persecutions of the pagans, the summons to meetings for worship could be given only by the most noiseless signs possible that would not attract the attention of the pagans. Not until the conversion of Constantine (beginning of the fourth century) was it possible to use noisy signals to invite to worship.⁷² In spite of their late attestation, church-bells have been looked upon as a product of Christianity, and at best it was only observed that they had precursors in Judaism and paganism, for instance in the golden bells with which the mantle of the Jewish high priest was adorned at its lower edge together with cotton pomegranates.⁷³ However this is a very different matter from the bells which call to worship in Buddhism and Christianity. Bardesanes speaks of bells in India as early as the year 175.⁷⁴

⁶⁹ F. X. Kraus, *Real-Encyklopädie*, II, 866.

⁷⁰ A. Weber, *Indische Skizzen*, 58, Note 1.

⁷¹ Tertullian, *Apol.* 42 in Bohlen, I, 344-345.

⁷² *Ibid.*, I, 622, 623.

⁷³ *Hersogs Realencyklopädie*, 3d ed., VI, 704.

⁷⁴ Bohlen, I, 346.

Single correspondences in the forms of worship would be of no significance for the question of historical connection, but in my opinion such a profusion as we have here makes a borrowing on the part of Christianity highly probable in consideration of the late evidence of the Christian parallels throughout, especially as the path traveled by the loan I have assumed seems perfectly clear. More than a great *probability* can not be asserted at this time; *certainty* can be hoped for only from new discoveries of decisive importance in countries now under investigation, especially Turkestan.

Finally it should be mentioned that the common utilization of the halo in both Christianity and Buddhism comes from classical antiquity. On ancient Roman monuments the nimbus is seen repeatedly in pictorial representations of the gods and apotheosized emperors; in Christianity it appears at the earliest at the end of the third century.⁷⁵ Hence it has been transmitted to Buddhism from the Occident and indeed at so early a date that the figure of Buddha appears with a nimbus on coins of King Kanishka (about 100 A. D.) It may have come even earlier to India directly from Hellenism.

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⁷⁵ F. X. Kraus, *op. cit.*, II, 496.